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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 015208

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DEPT. PASS TO USAID

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TAGS: [AEMR](#) [CASC](#) [EAID](#) [MASS](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#)

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE: WHAT THEY NEED

REF: ISLAMABAD 15130

Classified By: Derived from DSCG 05-01, B

¶11. (c) Summary and Comment: The scale of devastation from yesterday's earthquake is becoming increasingly clear as information comes in from remote, outlying provinces. The Government now estimates that the number of fatalities could range between 32,000 and 40,000 -- and possibly more. Villages have been wiped out by the quake itself or by resulting landslides and large areas of the north have been rendered inaccessible by damage to roads. It is now clear that a sizable, coordinated effort will be needed to provide relief and to support reconstruction. Having returned from a tour of the north, Musharraf's top priorities are helicopter lift, tents, blankets and medicine. Other donors have joined us in assembling relief packages, but Pakistani officials have made clear that they will need significant helicopter capacity to deliver assistance -- something they will likely need for the foreseeable future and that the United States is uniquely positioned to provide. Given U.S. interests in Pakistan and the region, it is imperative that we come forward with a substantial and flexible relief package. We have an opportunity to win considerable goodwill -- particularly within affected populations in the Northern Areas, Pakistani Kashmir and the NWFP -- and to demonstrate that we are a strategic partner they can count on. In line with our other commitments to Pakistan, we recommend we seize the high ground and be prepared to announce an assistance package of at least \$20 million, and be the first off the block to say that we are interested not only in relief, but also rebuilding. (By way of comparison, we would note that the appropriation for Tsunami relief totaled \$901 million.)

End Summary and Comment.

The Toll

¶12. (u) While the GOP is literally digging out from the wreckage of Saturday morning's earthquake -- the worst in Pakistan's recorded history -- it is clear that the scope of Saturday morning's earthquake will be a major humanitarian disaster, far exceeding initial estimates. On Sunday morning, GOP officials went public with a figure of roughly 18,000 fatalities, but they are telling the international donor community their own estimates are 32,000 fatalities, and they realistically assume that figure could rise to 40,000. Four million people will be affected by quake damage, split roughly between the North West Frontier Province and Azad Jammu-Kashmir/Northern Areas. International media coverage has focused on discrete incidents of damage and building collapse in the major urban areas of Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore, but it is already clear from phone reports that the scale of devastation is considerably greater in the inaccessible mountainous area near the epicenter, where there are reports of entire villages being leveled by landslides. Landslides have closed many of the mountain roadways that form the principal means of access to the hill communities near the epicenter; while the GOP optimistically estimates they will reopen most within several days, some of the worst hit could take weeks to repair. Here in Islamabad, donor coordination has been hampered by an inability to move back into the high rises where many UN bodies and ngo's have their offices, until their structural soundness has been confirmed.

¶13. (u) The Embassy and American Citizen community in Pakistan has largely been spared. Our Consular Section's warden system, as well as a quick check of the hospitals here in Islamabad, has uncovered no American Citizen casualties. We have confirmed that the entire American staff of the Embassy, as well as TDY staff, is unhurt. We have confirmed that no FSN employees were killed or seriously injured; as best we know, only one FSN family member (the son of the DCM's driver) was killed, in the Azad area near the epicenter. It appears the Embassy's physical plant -- chancery, residence, housing compound and leased and owned residential properties -- did not sustain significant damage.

Identified Needs

¶14. (u) U.N. agencies are working together to put together a

flash appeal for donor contributions that they plan to release on Monday evening. Our understanding is the flash appeal will focus on relief needs but also contain a preliminary assessment of the reconstruction needs. The GOP has outlined its near term priorities to the donor community as the following:

-- shelter for up to four million affected. (Embassy Note: the majority of quake damage occurred in a mountainous region where temperatures will drop significantly within about a month. There will be significant need for winter-weight tents, building supplies, and possibly prefab housing);
-- health support -- hospitals (both civil and military), mobile hospitals, surgical supplies, and disease control supplies;
-- water (containers, purification equipment and water itself)
-- search and rescue support.

15. (u) In the near term, there is also a need for earth moving equipment to help clear roads to the affected areas. It is possible that the damage will prompt a flow of displaced persons out of the mountains south to the plains around Islamabad and Rawalpindi, in which case supplies to support camps will be needed. The U.N. country team, led by UNDAC (UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination) has organized itself around the following clusters of priorities, with the indicated body in the lead: health (WHO) nutrition (UNICEF); water and sanitation (UNICEF), shelter (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies); logistics (WFP); emergency telecommunications (WFP); protection (UNHCR) and camp management (UNHCR).

U.S. Response to Date

16. (u) On Sunday, the Embassy released a press statement outlining our initial contribution to help Pakistan address this disaster:
-- an immediate contribution of \$500,000 for emergency relief supplier, to be provided through NGOs
-- eight U.S. military helicopters to assist in bringing in emergency relief to communities and villages affected by the earthquake.
-- A seven-person Disaster Assistant Response Team (DART), scheduled to arrive on October 10 and 11, which will assess humanitarian needs, assist with targeting and coordination of USG assistance, and provide technical assistance as needed;
-- Relief commodities being airlifted to Pakistan from USG stockpiles in the region, including: 250 rolls of plastic sheeting (sufficient for approximately 2,500 families), 5,000 blankets, and 5,000 water containers.
-- An ongoing military airlift of other relief supplies.
-- U.S.-funded Ministry of Interior Airwing is providing helicopters for aerial relief support.
-- Two C-130 aircraft in-bound to Islamabad tonight (October 9) with humanitarian relief supplies.

Other Donors

17. (u) Most major donors have also made contributions, and have indicated they anticipate providing significantly more as more detailed information becomes available. Nine countries are sending search and rescue teams (China, Korea, Russia, Turkey, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Japan and the United Arab Emirates). NGOs working in country, including Save the Children, Mercy Corps and Oxfam, have established an NGO secretariat in Islamabad to coordinate delivery.

Next Steps

18. (u) Musharraf toured the north today. His Military Secretary and ISI Director General Kiyani both contacted me

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subsequently to convey Musharraf's urgent request for helicopter lift, tents, blankets and medicine. Both were very grateful for CFC-A's quick action to make available eight aircraft. It is clear, however, that the magnitude of the task will require more assets, and for a prolonged period of time.

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